

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background of the Research**

Language as a product of a culture plays important roles in human's life especially in communication. The function of language is to communicate each other. From language, we can understand what we feel and think each other. As well as, we can gain a lot of information and knowledge around the world. Kridalaksana (2008) stated that language is a system of sound symbols used by members of a society to work together, interact, and identify themselves. From the above understanding, it can be concluded that language is an important element in human life, enabling us to convey our thoughts, emotions, and intentions.

English is one of international language which is widely used all around the world. It means that English is very essential to master. According to the Crystal (2019), English has its position as first, second, and foreign language which varies significantly across different context. As a first language, English is predominantly spoken in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In these regions, it serves as the primary means of communication and is deeply embedded in the culture and daily life of its speakers. As a second language, English is widely taught and used in many countries around the world, particularly in non-English speaking nations. It often serves as a lingua franca, facilitating communication between speakers of different native languages. Countries like India, Nigeria, and the Philippines exemplify this role, where English is used in government, education, and business, despite the presence of numerous local languages. In the context of foreign language learning, English is one of the most studied languages globally. Many people learn English as a foreign language to enhance their career prospects, access information, and participate in global culture. This trend is

particularly proven in countries like China, Japan, and Brazil, where English education is prioritized in schools and universities.

In Indonesia, English holds an essential role as a foreign language, primarily used in education, business, and international communication. Its status varies across regions, with urban areas generally exhibiting higher proficiency levels compared with rural regions. English is often taught in schools, but the effectiveness of instruction can be different based on local educational policies and resources. For instance, in Enrekang regency, English is taught alongside the local language, namely Massenrempulu language. Massenrempulu language is one of regional languages used in South Sulawesi. This language is the mother tongue in the Enrekang Regency area, South Sulawesi, and several other places in the surrounding areas such as Bungi, Teppu, Barabaraya Municipality. Ujung Pandang and Ujung Bulu Municipality of Pare-Pare. Massenrempulu language functions as a language of instruction between Massenrempulu residents and is also used as a tool of cultural transition (Prasetyo, 2019). Palengkahu (1972) stated that the language in Massenrempulu may consist of four dialects, namely Duri dialect, Endekan dialect, Maiwa dialect, and Patinjo dialect. In Massenrempulu language, the Endekan dialect has social status and dominant function and the most influential when compared with three other dialects (Duri, Maiwa and Pattinjo dialects). This matter caused by the use of the Endekan dialect in Enrekang District which is the center of government and cultural center in the Regency Enrekang. Endekan dialect that is agreed to be the standard dialect Massenrempulu language to be taught in schools and used in reading books. (Sikki, Hakim, Mulya, and Rijal, 1997).

In language learning, understanding how language is formed is crucial for mastering its structure. Language is typically organized from smaller units, starting with letters (which are the smallest units of sound or writing) and progressing to words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The word is a key unit of meaning which is categorized into different word classes such as noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. The word is made up of one or more morphemes, which are the smallest units of meaning. Words are categorized into different word classes or parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, based on their function in

a sentence. One crucial word class is the adjective, which describes or modifies a noun. They usually precede the nouns they modify, giving specific information about their attributes. For example, in the sentence “The *red* book is *new*,” the adjectives “*red*” and “*new*” describe the noun “book,” indicating its color and condition. English adjectives can be classified into several types, including descriptive, quantitative, demonstrative, possessive, and interrogative adjectives. Descriptive adjectives, such as *beautiful* or *fast*, describe inherent qualities. Quantitative adjectives, like *some* or *many*, indicate quantity. Demonstrative adjectives, such as *this* or *that*, point to specific items. Possessive adjectives, like *my* or *their*, show ownership, while interrogative adjectives, such as *which* or *what*, are used in questions (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2015).

A significant feature of English adjectives is their ability to express degrees of comparison. These degrees are typically classified into positive, comparative, and superlative. The positive form is the base adjective used to describe a single entity without making comparisons (e.g., *fast*). The comparative form is used to compare two entities, usually by adding the suffix *-er* to the base adjective or using the word *more* before the adjective e.g., *faster*, *more beautiful*). The superlative form is used to compare three or more entities, typically by adding the suffix *-est* to the base adjective or using the word *most* before the adjective (e.g., *fastest*, *most beautiful*) (Murphy, 2019).

The formation of comparative and superlative adjectives in English follows specific rules. For one-syllable adjectives, the comparative form is usually created by adding *-er*, and the superlative form by adding *-est* (e.g., *small*, *smaller*, *smallest*). For adjectives with two syllables ending in *-y*, the *-y* is replaced with *-i* before adding *-er* or *-est* (e.g., *happy*, *happier*, *happiest*). For adjectives with more than one syllable, the words *more* and *most* are used to form the comparative and superlative forms (e.g., *important*, *more important*, *most important*) (Murphy, 2019).

On the other hand, adjectives in Massenrempulu typically follow the nouns they modify, which is common in many Austronesian languages. For example, the Massenrempulu equivalent of “a *big* house” would be “bola *battoa*,” where “bola”

means “house” and “*battoa*” means “*big*.” This noun-adjective order contrasts with the adjective-noun order found in English.

The formation of degrees of comparison in Massenrempulu language also differs from English. Massenrempulu does not use suffixes like *-er* and *-est* or modifiers *more* and *most* to indicate comparative and superlative forms. Instead, degrees of comparison are often expressed using adjective syntactic maker and clitics. For example, when comparing adjectives, Massenrempulu employs syntactic maker like *-pada* means *the same* (positive) and *-gaja* means *very* (superlative), whereas in the comparative degree uses the clitic (e.g., *aq*) after the adjective. For instance, *Bolamu pada maregena bolaku* (*Your house is as good as my house*), *Maccaaq na andimu*. (*smarter I than your sister/ I am smarter than your sister*), *Battoa gaja to patti*. (*big very It's box/It is a very big box.*)

These examples highlight the distinct grammatical strategies employed by Massenrempulu speakers to express degrees of comparison while demonstrating similarity in the word order of positive formation and differences in the use of suffixes, clitics, modifiers, and adjective syntactic makers. In addition, differences also arise in the structure formation of the comparative and superlative forms, with Massenrempulu employing a different syntactic order and word formation.

A contrastive analysis of degrees of comparison in both languages reveals essential insights into how each language constructs and expresses the comparisons. One notable distinction is the morphological processes utilized to form comparatives and superlatives. While English relies on the addition of suffixes and the use of modifiers, Massenrempulu language employs adjective syntactic markers and cliticization. This contrast reflects the grammatical differences between the two languages and highlights the cultural perspectives that shape the use of degrees of comparison in different contexts.

Additionally, the cultural impact of how language is used is important in both English and Massenrempulu. The ways people in each language compare things can show their cultural values and social customs. This affects how they see and describe their relationships with others. Understanding this helps us appreciate the variety and richness of communication among different cultures.

In conclusion, this research aims to explore the degrees of comparison in English and Massenrempulu language, providing a comprehensive analysis of their grammatical structures and cultural implications. By examining these similarities and differences, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of linguistic diversity and the role of language in shaping human thought and communication. The contrastive study of degrees of comparison enriches our knowledge of two distinct languages and highlights the importance of linguistic research in fostering cross-cultural understanding. Thus, the researcher is interested in conducting research to contrast both of languages; English and Massenrempulu entitled *“Degrees of Comparisons in English and Massenrempulu Language: A Contrastive Study”*

## **B. Research Questions**

Based on the background described above, the formulation of the research questions of this research were:

1. How are the Degrees of Comparisons formed in English?
2. How are the Degrees of Comparisons formed in Massenrempulu language?
3. What are the differences between Degrees of Comparisons in English and Massenrempulu language?
4. What are the similarities between Degrees of Comparisons in English and Massenrempulu language?

## **C. Research Objectives**

In relation to the problem statement above, the objectives of this research were:

1. To analyze the process of forming Degrees of Comparisons in English.
2. To analyze the process of forming Degrees of Comparisons in Massenrempulu language
3. To investigate the differences between Degrees of Comparisons in English and Massenrempulu language.
4. To investigate the similarities between Degrees of Comparisons in English and Massenrempulu language.

## **D. Research Significances**

### **a. Theoretical Significance**

By focusing on contrastive analysis in Degrees of Comparison, this research provides valuable insights into the structural similarities and differences between languages. Such insights deepen our understanding of how languages function and interact, particularly in the context of English and Massenrempulu.

This research not only contributes to linguistic theory but also serves as an important reference for future studies aiming to explore the intricacies of language comparison. It enhances the understanding of language learning challenges faced by speakers of different linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, it fosters a greater appreciation for the diversity of languages and underscores the importance of preserving and studying indigenous languages in linguistic research.

### **b. Practical Significance**

The practical benefits of this research are significant, particularly for educators teaching English to speakers whose first language is Massenrempulu. The findings can serve a useful reference in designing and compiling teaching materials that address the unique linguistic challenges faced by these learners. By incorporating insights from this research into their curriculum, teachers can develop materials that are more effective and tailored to the specific needs of Massenrempulu speakers.

This research is also expected to help facilitate the learning process, particularly in understanding and using Degrees of Comparison in English. It bridges the gap between the learners' native language and English, highlighting differences and similarities to enhance comprehension. Consequently, students will find it easier to grasp the concept and usage of Degrees of Comparison, leading to improved language proficiency. Furthermore, the study offers practical strategies and examples that can be directly applied in teaching practices.

### **E. Scope of the Research**

Based on the problem and the objectives of the study, the researcher focuses on the discussion on the degrees of comparison in adjectives in English and Massenrempulu language, specifically in positive, comparative, and superlative degrees. Massenrempulu has four dialects: Endekan, Duri, Pattinjo and Maiwa. Among these, Endekan stands out as the most widely spoken and well-documented dialect (Sikki, Rijal, Rasyid and Jemmain, 1995), which is why the researcher chooses Endekan as the dialect used in this research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Previous Studies

Several researches have been conducted related to contrastive analysis. Jong-Bok Kim (2010) investigated “*A Contrastive Analysis between English and Korean Comparative Constructions*”. The purpose of the research was the researcher looked into the comparative constructions of two typologically different languages, Korean and English. The result of this study indicated that typologically different English and Korean display clear contrasts in many aspects. Korean exhibits distinct grammatical characteristics from English, despite using the adverb *te* 'more' and the postposition *pota* 'than' to describe similar relational objects. The fact that Korean clausal-like comparatives are actually relative clauses headed by the formal noun is one of the primary distinctions between Korean and English. In addition, in terms of semantics, the results of study have shown that the interpretation of English comparatives is compositional, whereas Korean comparatives highly hinge on context.

Prafantya (2011) carried out research entitled “*Comparative and Superlative Comparison of Adjectives in English and Indonesian Language (An Analysis of Contrastive Linguistics)*.” The purpose of the research was to analyze the morphological processes used to form comparative and superlative adjectives in both English and Indonesian, highlighting the differences on how these degrees of comparison are expressed in each language. The research found that in English, the formation of comparative and superlative adjectives depends on the number of syllables and the final sound of the adjective, particularly for words with two syllables. In contrast, Indonesian forms comparative and superlative adjectives using adverbial phrases that precede the adjective, rather than altering the adjective itself. This highlights a key difference in the morphological processes of degree comparison between the two languages.

Gui Xin Pan (2012) conducted research entitled “*A Contrastive Study of the English and Chinese Comparative Constructions*”. The purpose of this research



was to analyze different ways of comparing expressions in Chinese and English and then to find out the reasons that generate the differences. The data was taken with the help of library and Internet, the research had analyzed comparison in three aspects: semantically, syntactically. In order to help English learners in China understand better the quirks of their mother tongue and English in comparison expressions, it was then necessary to analyze the factors that gave rise to the differences. This enabled them to be more aware of not making mistakes when writing in English or in daily conversations. The result of this study indicated that there were many similarities between the English and Chinese in comparison expressions in both semantic and syntactic aspect, yet their differences outweighed their similarities.

Hohaus (2016) conducted research entitled "*Comparisons of Equality with German so ... wie, and the Relationship Between Degrees and Properties.*" This paper focuses to develop a unified semantic framework for the various types of comparisons expressed by the German construction *so ... wie*, including comparisons of manner, quality, and degree. The findings show that *so ... wie* relates two sets (degrees, properties, events, or individuals) through a subset-or-equal relation. The research also extends the standard quantificational analysis of comparative constructions, demonstrating that degrees can be conceptualized as special kinds of properties. It highlights how *so ... wie* operates beyond gradable adjectives and suggests that the grammar of degree may derive from linguistic elements used for qualities or manners, often paralleling scalar domains like time or space.

Aswar (2016) explored research entitled "*Contrastive Analysis of Masserempulu Language and English*". The purpose of this paper was to describe the structure of informational sentence formation in Masserempulu and English, to describe the structure of yes/no question formation in Masserempulu and English, and the consequences of differences due to learning English for speakers of Masserempulu as the mother tongue. The data for Masserempulu question sentences are taken from Indonesian texts produced by researchers, and then native speakers are asked to translate them into Masserempulu. The information for the English interrogative sentence is taken from grammar books and English conversation. The results of this study showed that there are three

similarities and five differences between the two languages. The difference between Massrempulu and English interrogative sentences can cause mistakes when learning English.

Henriawan (2017) conducted research *"A Contrastive Analysis of English and Sundanese Two Root Noun Phrase Constructions"*. The purpose of the research was to describe English and Sundanese noun phrases construction then explain the similarities and differences between English and Sundanese noun phrases construction. The findings of the research showed that there are fourteen patterns of English noun phrase based on its class of elements. On the other hand, there are eleven pattern of Sundanese noun phrase. There are only four same patterns in both English and Sundanese noun phrases. The construction type and modifier position of those patterns are exactly same both in English and Sundanese. There are two differences between English and Sundanese noun phrase constructions. First, some noun phrase constructions do not exist in Sundanese and only found in English. Second, the noun phrase construction exists in both languages, but with different modifier positions.

Hohaus (2018), had done research titled *"How do Degrees Enter the Grammar? Language Change in Samoan from [-DSP] to [+DSP]"*, which investigated a recent shift in the Degree Semantics Parameter (DSP) within Samoan grammar through a diachronic corpus analysis. The purpose of the research was to trace how degrees were introduced into the language's grammar, transitioning from a [-DSP] setting (lacking degree semantics) to a [+DSP] setting (incorporating degree semantics). The findings suggest that Samoan originally lacked degree semantics, but the appropriation of another scalar concept, specifically through the reanalysis of the directional particle *atu* ('forth, away'), enabled this transition. This change involved two mechanisms of language evolution: borrowing from the spatial domain and syntactic reanalysis of ambiguous structures. Typological data indicate that borrowing from spatial domains is common in comparative constructions, while no such borrowing occurs from the temporal domain.

Pearson (2019) examined *"How to Do Comparison in Language Without a Degree: A Semantics for the Comparative in Fijian"*. The primary aim of this research was to analyze the distinction between implicit and explicit comparison,

following the theoretical framework proposed by Kennedy. The study's findings revealed that Fijian serves as an example of a language that operates exclusively with implicit comparison (IC). The author critically evaluated Kennedy's diagnostic criteria for identifying IC and highlighted their limitations when applied across languages. Additionally, the study introduced novel diagnostic methods tailored to Fijian. The research proposed a semantic framework for Fijian comparatives that does not rely on degree arguments, offering new insights into the linguistic mechanisms underlying comparison. Furthermore, the study explored potential sources of cross-linguistic variation in the use and interpretation of comparatives, contributing significantly to the broader field of comparative semantics.

Piloton, Rodriguez, & Garcia (2024) performed research titled *"An Analysis of the Morphological Structure of Degree of Comparison in Blaán Language,"* which aimed to examine the morphological processes involved in forming adjectives in Blaán, particularly focusing on the structure of positive, comparative, and superlative degrees of comparison. The research findings revealed that similar to English, Blaán uses affixes to mark degrees of comparison. For example, the comparative degree is formed with the affix *"la Ali,"* used when comparing two items, people, or ideas, while the superlative degree is marked by *"to ti,"* used for comparing one entity to others. The research emphasized the importance of understanding affixes in language acquisition and suggested that teachers can use this knowledge to enhance students' understanding of morphological structures in Blaán. The study also highlights the role of affixation in developing common terms in the language, contributing to both language learning and linguistic awareness.

Muhammadiyah & Qayumova (2024) carried out research entitled *"Similarities and Differences of Degree of Adjective in English and Uzbek Languages,"* aiming to explore the similarities and differences in how adjective degrees are expressed in both languages. The research found that in English, adjectives are formally structured into positive, comparative, and superlative degrees, typically using suffixes or the words "more" and "most." Adjectives usually precede the noun they modify, with strict rules governing their usage and placement. In contrast, Uzbek does not have a formal system for adjective degrees. Instead, it uses word order, adverbs, and comparison words to indicate

degrees of comparison. Additionally, Uzbek adjectives can appear both before and after the noun, offering greater flexibility in sentence construction.

The previous studies on contrastive analysis of degree comparison in various languages share some similarities but also highlight key differences that directly influence the new research titled *"Degrees of Comparison in English and Massenrempulu Language: A Contrastive Analysis."* Similarities can be observed in the research focus on comparing the grammatical structures and morphological processes of degree comparison in different languages. For instance, Jong-Bok Kim (2010) and Prafantya (2011) explored the morphological processes in English and other languages, focusing on comparative and superlative forms, while Pearson (2010) and Hohaus (2016) examined semantic frameworks of comparison. These studies emphasized the typological differences in how comparative constructions are expressed in languages such as English, Korean, Fijian, and Indonesian, often noting the linguistic mechanisms that distinguish how degree comparison is formed and interpreted. Additionally, Aswar (2016) and Piloton et al. (2024) looked at specific language families like Massenrempulu and Blaan, suggesting how understanding comparative structures in these languages can help in language acquisition.

However, significant differences arise in the linguistic methods used to express degrees of comparison. Kim (2010) and Hohaus (2016) highlighted how syntactic structures and semantic properties, such as relative clauses or the use of scalar properties, contrast across languages. For example, Pearson (2010) focused on implicit comparison in Fijian, while Prafantya (2011) and Piloton et al. (2024) focused on morphological affixes in English and Blaan. These variations in approach lead to different findings in terms of syntactic, morphological, and semantic structures. The unique findings from these studies will provide valuable insights into how the Massenrempulu language, with its distinct structures, compares to English in terms of degrees of comparisons, offering a clearer contrast between the two languages' grammatical systems. The new research will likely fill the gap by analyzing Massenrempulu in contrast with English, contributing to a deeper understanding of language variation in degrees comparisons.

## **B. Theoretical Background**

### **a. Contrastive Analysis**

#### **a.) Concept of Contrastive Analysis**

Contrastive Analysis (CA) is a theoretical framework and approach in linguistics that aims to identify the similarities and differences between two or more languages. The concept is rooted in the idea that by understanding these differences, educators can better predict and address the difficulties that language learners may face when acquiring a new language. CA posits that learning difficulties are primarily caused by interference from learners' native languages. This approach is based on the behaviorist theory of language learning, which emphasizes that language habits formed in a person's first language can interfere with learning another language. Lado (1957) was one of the early pioneers in this area, arguing that a systematic comparison of languages could facilitate the development of more effective teaching strategies.

Modern applications of CA continue to explore these ideas but within a more nuanced understanding of language acquisition. Today, CA is not seen as the sole predictor of language difficulties but is often used alongside other approaches in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies to understand learner errors and interlanguage development. Studies by contemporary researchers, such as Gass & Selinker (2008), highlighted that while structural differences can indeed result in transfer errors, language acquisition is influenced by a complex interplay of cognitive, social, and contextual factors. Therefore, CA is used as one part of a comprehensive strategy to support language learning by anticipating areas where students might struggle due to differences between their native language and the target language.

In educational settings, CA is particularly beneficial for curriculum designers and language instructors who teach multilingual classes. By understanding the linguistic backgrounds of their students, teachers can design lessons that address common points of difficulty, such as phonetic or syntactic differences. A study by Odlin (2003) emphasized that CA remains a valuable tool, especially when adapted to meet the needs of specific learner groups. The focus of CA has thus shifted from a purely structural comparison

to a more dynamic tool that accounts for learners' backgrounds, helping educators create supportive, context-sensitive language instruction.

### **b.) Procedure of Contrastive Analysis**

Contrastive analysis is a linguistic methodology that systematically compares two or more languages to identify their structural similarities and differences, primarily to inform language teaching and learning (Whitman, 1970). The procedure typically involves the following steps:

1. Description: Each language's relevant linguistic features—such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics—are described independently to establish a comprehensive understanding of their structures.
2. Selection: Specific linguistic elements are chosen for comparison based on their relevance to the study's objectives, such as areas where learners commonly face difficulties or where significant structural differences are hypothesized.
3. Comparison (Contrast): The selected elements are systematically compared to identify similarities and differences, focusing on how each language expresses particular grammatical or phonological features.
4. Prediction: Based on the identified differences, predictions are made about potential challenges learners might encounter due to interference from their native language, aiding in the development of targeted teaching strategies.

This structured approach facilitates the anticipation of learning difficulties and the creation of effective instructional materials tailored to address specific linguistic challenges (Whitman, 1970).

## **b. Degrees of Comparisons**

### **a.) Concept of Degrees of Comparison**

The researcher would like to illustrate what comparison is before investigating degrees of comparison. Comparison is used to contrast one thing or person to another. Following Azar (2018) stated that the comparison degree of an adjective and adverbs describes the relative value of one thing to something in another sentence.

Degrees of comparison refer to the grammatical forms used to compare the qualities or quantities of nouns in various intensities or levels. In general, there are three degrees of comparison: positive, comparative, and superlative. The positive degree describes a quality without making any comparison (e.g., **tall**), the comparative degree compares two entities (e.g., **taller**), and the superlative degree expresses the highest degree among three or more entities (e.g., **tallest**). According to Celce-Murcia et al. (2015), degrees of comparison is essential in expressing gradation, allowing speakers to describe relationships between objects, people, or concepts more precisely.

Degrees of comparison are widely used in many languages, though the methods to express them vary. Some languages use morphological changes or inflections, such as suffixes, to mark comparative and superlative forms, while others rely on separate words or specific constructions. In English, for instance, monosyllabic adjectives often use **"-er"** and **"-est"** suffixes for the comparative and superlative forms, respectively. Meanwhile, longer adjectives use **"more"** and **"most"** to indicate degrees of comparison. Carter and McCarthy (2017) note that mastering these forms is crucial for learners to enhance their descriptive abilities and to accurately convey distinctions in intensity.

Degrees of comparison are not just linguistic forms but serve as tools for enhancing expression and clarity in both spoken and written communication. Language learners benefit from a clear understanding of these forms, as they add nuance and precision to descriptions. Using the correct degree of comparison can also improve language fluency, as it reflects a speaker's ability to distinguish subtle differences in meaning and intensity. Through studying these forms, learners can better grasp the complexities of expression within a language (Parrott, 2017).

### **b.) The Degrees of Comparisons in English Adjective**

Degrees of comparison in English adjectives express the intensity or extent of a quality. These degrees help compare two or more nouns based on their characteristics (Murphy, 2019). The three main

degrees of comparison are positive, comparative, and superlative (Azar, 2018).

### 1. Positive Degree

The positive degree is the base form of an adjective. It simply describes a noun without comparing it to anything else (Swan, 2016).

Examples:

*The sky is **blue**.*

*She is **tall**.*

Some unusual adjectives that remain the same in all degrees of comparison include:

Perfect, unique, and infinite (Murphy, 2019). These adjectives do not have comparative or superlative forms because their meaning is absolute.

### 2. Comparative Degree

The comparative degree is used when comparing two nouns. It often ends in *-er* for short adjectives or uses *more* before longer adjectives (Azar, 2018).

Examples:

*This road is **wider** than that one.*

*She is **more** intelligent than her sister.*

### 3. Superlative Degree

The superlative degree is used when comparing three or more nouns, indicating the highest or lowest quality (Murphy, 2019). It usually ends in *-est* for short adjectives or uses *most* before longer adjectives (Azar, 2018).

Examples:

*This is the **widest** road in the city.*

*She is the **most** intelligent student in the class.*



### c.) The Use of Degrees of Comparisons in English Adjective

#### 1. Positive Degree

The positive degree is the base form of the adjective, expressing a general characteristic without comparison to others (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985).

**Example:** *This car is **fast**.* (No comparison is made; it merely describes the car as fast.)

#### 2. Comparative Degree

In English, comparatives usually use the *-er* suffix for one-syllable adjectives and the modifier *more* with longer adjectives, highlighting differences in attributes between two items (Celce-Murcia et. al, 2015).

**Example:** *This mountain is **taller** than that hill.*

*This book is **more** interesting than the one I read last week.*

#### 3. Superlative Degree

Superlative forms are constructed by adding *-est* to shorter adjectives or using *most* with longer adjectives to express that a noun possesses the highest or lowest degree of quality within a group (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2009).

**Example:** *This is the **sweetest** cake in the bakery.*

*This is the **most** exciting movie I have ever seen*

### d.) Rules for Forming Comparatives and Superlatives

Comparative and superlative formation rules depend on syllable count, with shorter adjectives typically using suffixes "*er*" and "*est*" and longer adjectives using "*more*" or "*most*" to indicate the degree (Huddleston & Pullum, 2017)

The construction of comparative and superlative forms varies based on the length and structure of the adjective:

1. One-syllable adjectives: Add "*-er*" for comparatives and "*-est*" for superlatives.

Example: "*small*" becomes *smaller* and *smallest*.

2. Two-syllable adjectives ending in "-y": Replace "-y" with "-ier" for the comparative and "-iest" for the superlative.

Example: "*happy*" becomes *happier* and *happiest*.

3. Two or more syllable adjectives: Use "*more*" for comparatives and "*most*" for superlatives.

Example: "*beautiful*" becomes *more beautiful* and *most beautiful*.

### e.) Irregular Comparatives and Superlatives

Some adjectives do not follow the regular rules for forming comparative and superlative forms and instead have irregular forms.

Irregular adjectives have unique comparative and superlative forms due to historical linguistic evolution, and they don't conform to standard rules of "-er" or "more" formation (Crystal, 2003).

#### Examples:

- **good** (Positive) → **better** (comparative), **best** (superlative)
- **bad** (Positive) → **worse** (comparative), **worst** (superlative)
- **little** (Positive) → **less** (comparative), **least** (superlative)

### f.) Special Forms in Degrees of Comparisons in English Adjectives

Besides the usual forms of the degrees of comparison (adding **-er**, **-est** for short adjectives and using **more**, **most** for longer adjectives) and irregular forms (e.g., **good** → **better** → **best**), English also has special forms of comparison that do not follow these common patterns.

1. **Less/Least**: This expresses a diminution of a quality. (Swan, 2005)
  - Comparative: *This option is **less expensive** than the other.*
  - Superlative: *This is **the least** surprising outcome.*
2. Positive Comparisons: These show equality. (Swan, 2005)
  - **as...as**: *He is **as tall as** his sister.*
  - **so...as** (less common, often in negative contexts): *He **isn't so athletic as** she is.*

3. Parallel Comparatives: These demonstrate correlated increase or decrease. (Swan, 2005)
  - **the...the:** *The more you practice, the better you become, the less you worry, the happier you'll be.*
4. Absolute Adjectives (and their "exceptions"): These adjectives (e.g., **perfect, unique, dead**) theoretically shouldn't have degrees. However, usage sometimes bends the rules. (Murphy, 2019)
  - Figurative/Intensified Use: *This is the most unique experience.* (Note: This usage is often debated. Some argue it's illogical, while others accept it as a way to emphasize the quality.)
  - Approximation: *A more perfect solution* (meaning closer to ideal, not absolutely perfect).
5. Compound Adjectives: These can be tricky. (Swan, 2005)
  - Hyphenated modifiers before a noun: *A better-known author* (not more well-known in this specific construction)
  - Predicate adjectives (after a linking verb): *He is more well-known than his contemporary.*
6. Archaic/Dialectical Forms: These are rare in modern standard English. (Eastwood, 2002)
  - -re/-st: **Elder, eldest** (still found in set phrases like "**elder brother**").
7. Variable Comparison: Some adjectives can take either **-er/-est** or **more/most**. (Swan, 2005)
  - clever: **cleverer/cleverest** or **more clever/most clever** (both are generally acceptable).
  - common: **commoner/commonest** or **more common/most common** (often, **-er/-est** is more informal).
8. Phrasal Comparisons: Comparison is expressed through phrases. (Celce-Murcia et al., 2015)
  - **more and more:** *It's getting more and more difficult.*
  - **less and less:** *He seems less and less interested.*

### c. Massenrempulu Language

#### a) The Origin of Massenrempulu Language

Sikki et al. (1997) explained that the word Massenrempulu was initially only used to denote territory and was later used to denote language, but was not used to denote humans, human groups, or ethnic groups. Users of this language declare themselves to be Endekan people, Duri people, or Maiwa people who are Bugis. After the era of independence, the word Massenrempulu was also used in community organizations such as the Massenrempulu Family Association (Himka), and the Massenrempulu Student and Student Association (HPMM). The Massenrempulu region was originally an alliance of seven kingdoms known as "Pitu Massenrempulu" consisting of Endekan, Kassa, Batulappa, Maiwan, Duri, Letta, and Baringin. The last two kingdoms then attacked Endekan, but Endekan and other alliance members responded with the help of Sidenreng. Letta and Baringin were degraded and there remained five kingdoms which were the "Five Massenrempulu". After going through several processes, in 1912 *Onderafdeling* Enrekang was formed, consisting of Endekan, Maiwa, Alia, Maluwah, and Buttu Batu. Starting in 1960, Enrekang Regency was formed, consisting of five sub-districts, namely Alla, Anggeraja, Baraka, Enrekang, and Maiwa.

Pelenkahu (1978) stated that the use of the Massenrempulu language is spread across several districts and municipalities, namely the entire Enrekang Regency, several places in Pinrang Regency, Luwu Regency, Sidenreng Rappang Regency, Polewali Mamasa Regency, Pare-pare Municipality, Ujung Pandang Municipality, as well as several residential areas of Massenrempulu residents in other places such as in East Kalimantan, Irian Jaya, and Malaysia. All Massenrempulu speakers are estimated to be 214,030 people, namely in Enrekang Regency 121,959 people (96%) of the total population, in Pinrang Regency 64,733 people (25%) of the total population, and around 27,298 people are in Luwu Regency, Sidenreng Rappang, Polewali Mamasa, and Ujung Pandang Municipality. The Massenrempulu language to this day still plays a role as a means of communication in various people's lives and is a supporter of the

Massenrempulu regional culture which has a long history and tradition and continues to develop to this day. This old tradition covers the fields of art, law, economics and culture. From this history and tradition, it can be seen that this language has always been well maintained and developed by its speakers. According to Pelenkahu (1978), Massenrempulu has four dialects with the following areas of distribution.

### **1. Endekan dialect**

This dialect is used in the Enrekang District and Bambapuang Village of Anggeraja District. The transition to the Duri dialect is found in Rura or Lura, while the transition to the Maiwa dialect in the south is found around Kabere. In this environment you can also find several variations between the west and east of the Mataallo River, such as in Kaluppini and Ranga.

### **2. Maiwa dialect**

This dialect is used in Enrekang Regency in Maiwa District, start from Karrang in the north to Salo Karaja in the south (Rappang border), then to Bungin Village in the northeast on the slopes of Mount Latimojong, across the border to the east, from Bungin to Teluk Bone around Keppe (southern part of Luwu Regency). To the southeast, across the Tabang River and downstream of the Bila River in the northeastern part of Sidenreng Rappang Regency, there are several villages that use the Maiwa dialect. To the west, near Malimpung, Pinrang Regency, the Maiwa dialect is also used. In Malimpung Village there is a mixture of several Bugis and Massenrempulu dialects. In general, the Maiwa dialect spread across Bugis areas shows various variants due to the absorption of different Bugis language influences.

### **3. Duri Dialect**

This dialect is used in the former Tallu Batupapan federation area (Alla, Maluwah, Buttu Batu), namely the entire Baraka District (except some admixtures at the Maiwa border), most of Anggeraja District (except Bambapuang Village), most of Alla District (except an enclave Saqdan language in Masalle and some places around Corio). To the northeast of Alla District, across Salubarani, there are several places in Gandang Batu Village (Tana Toraja Regency) where the Duri dialect is spoken. This dialect also has several variations, such as Pasui and Maluwah.

#### 4. Pattinjo Dialect

This dialect is spoken in the northern part of Pinrang Regency, in Patampanua District (especially in Benteng and Belajeng Kassa), Duampanua District (especially around Lasape, Batulappa Village, and Bungin), Lembang District (in Letta Village, Basseang, Ulu Saqdan, Rajang, Tadokkong and Gallang-gallang). In Supiran Village the Saqdan language is used, but in several places in Binuang (Polewali Mamasa Regency) there is the Pattinjo dialect around the Binanga Karaeng River. This dialect also has several variants.

Suparman (2019) stated that the Massenrempulu language continues to serve as a vital means of communication in various aspects of community life. It also acts as a cultural foundation for the Massenrempulu region, which boasts a long-standing history and tradition that has evolved and thrived to the present day. These longstanding traditions encompass diverse areas such as art, law, economics, and culture. The preservation and development of the Massenrempulu language by its speakers underscore its importance. Among the regional identities within the Massenrempulu area, distinct variations in dialects across communities highlight its linguistic diversity. This diversity is particularly intriguing as it reflects the dynamic development of the Massenrempulu region, especially in terms of its dialectal variations.

#### b) Degrees of Comparisons in Massenrempulu Language Adjectives

One of the main characteristics of adjectives is that this class of words can have a degree of comparison which states whether one form is 'the same', 'more', 'less', or 'most' when compared to another form. Thus, there are three types of levels of comparison, namely (1) positive, (2) comparative, and (3) superlative. (Sikki et al, 1997)

##### a.) Positive Degree

The positive degree is the level that states that the two things being compared are the same.

Example:

*lassi* → (1) a. ***Pada lassiaq i Hasbi***

***'as fast as I am i Hasbi'***

(*I am **as fast as** Hasbi.*)

#### b.) Comparative Degree

The comparative degree of comparison states that one of the two beings being compared is more or less than the other.

Below are some examples of each.

*macca* → (2) a. *Maccaaq na andimu.*

*smarter I than your sister*

(*I am **smarter** than your sister*)

#### c.) Superlative Degree

The superlative degree states that of the things being compared, one exceeds the others.

Look at the following example.

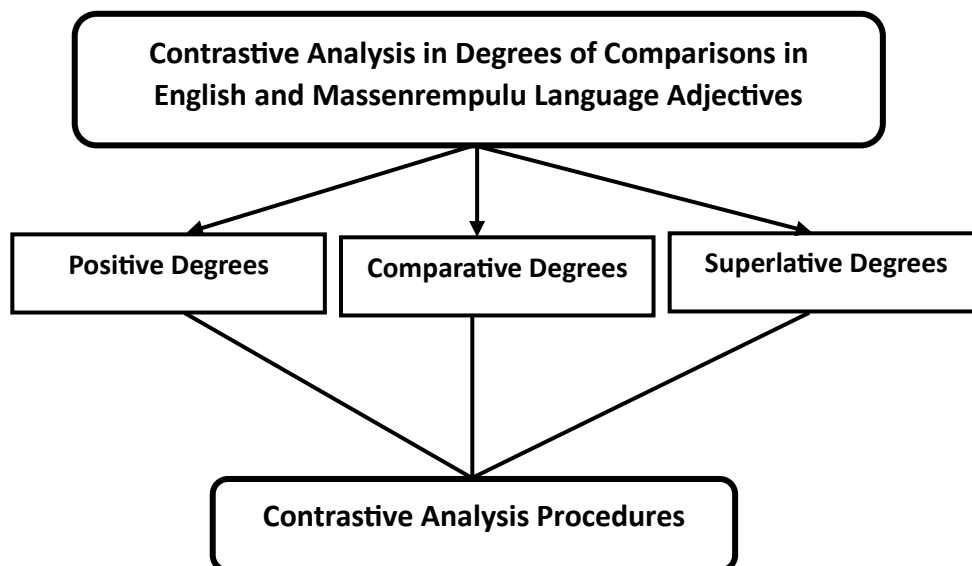
(3) a. *lamo tuu pasaq kaminang maroa.*

*is that **the busiest** market*

(*That is **the busiest** market.*)

### C. Conceptual Framework

This research examines the three types of degrees of comparison in both English and Massenrempulu language: the positive degree, the comparative degree, and the superlative degree. These categories were selected due to the focus on adjectives in contrasting data. The research draws on various theories regarding the formation of degrees of comparison in both English and Massenrempulu, as well as contrastive analysis. Additionally, this research employs the contrastive analysis procedure outlined by Whitman (1970), which was used to contrast the formation of degrees of comparison in the two languages. This research also aims to predict the potential effects of structural differences between the degrees of comparison in English and Massenrempulu. These predicted differences could result in errors or difficulties for learners, stemming from the contrasting structures of the degrees in both languages. The following figure illustrates the conceptual framework of this study:



*Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework*